

# The Structure and Function of Porcupines

**LS1.A:** All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water and air.

**Read about porcupines and answer three questions about their body structures.**

Porcupines have long, sharp, front teeth that grow throughout their lives. They eat leaves, twigs, buds and even bark. They have sharp claws and can climb trees escape predators and feed on the bark and twigs high off the ground. They have a slow, lumbering walk, so cannot out run predators, but few predators can successfully attack and feed on a porcupine because of their 30,000 sharp quills. Their quills sit in a sheath that release easily when a predator touches them. Plus, their pointed end has tiny barbs, like fishhooks, that snag an animal's skin and don't easily pull out. Porcupines, when approached by a predator, turn their back and raise their quills to make them more accessible to the predators face. Many family dogs have fallen for this trick and gotten a painful face full of quills.



Which body parts allow porcupines to feed on woody stems? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which body parts allow porcupines to climb up trees to feed and escape predators? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which body parts allow porcupines to defend themselves from predators? How? \_\_\_\_\_

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